



Bipartisan Aviation Security Substitute

On Tuesday, October 30, Rep. Oberstar submitted a substitute amendment to H.R. 3150, the Aviation Security Act. This measure is identical to S. 1447, the Aviation Security Act, passed by the Senate unanimously on October 11. It places responsibility for aviation security with the Federal Government to ensure that professional law enforcement agents are in charge of securing the airports and airplanes.

Improve Airport Screening

Airport Security Screening Force. Ensures that federal security personnel screen and check all individuals and baggage before boarding a plane. Specifically, the bill federalizes all security-screening functions at the 140 busiest airports to ensure a professional, well trained and well qualified air security law enforcement force. For over 250 smaller airports, this legislation would allow the Justice Department the flexibility to use federal law enforcement personnel, or state and local law enforcement under strict federal oversight as screeners.

This will ensure that security screeners are more highly paid – rather than continuing the practice of private contractors hiring personnel for less than fast food service wages who turn over every six months. Experts including the General Accounting Office, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Transportation Department have all indicated that low wages and high turnover are the major problem in aviation security.

Under the bill, screener applicants will be required to pass a rigorous selection examination, and complete classroom and on-the-job training.

It also gives the government flexibility to suspend or terminate under-performing employees. Consistent with existing law, federal employees would not have the right to strike.

Screening of All Baggage. Mandates a program that all checked baggage be screened by explosive detection equipment.

Security Screening & Background Checks of Airline Workers & Associated Employees. Requires screening of all persons, vehicles and other equipment entering secured areas, including catering and other companies with access to secured areas. Requires all current air carrier, airport and screening personnel to submit to background checks, and criminal history record checks.



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Ensures That Airplanes are Secure

Federal Air Marshals. Authorizes deployment of Federal Air Marshals on domestic and international flights.

Enhance Cockpit Security. Mandates cockpit doors and locks that cannot be opened by anyone other than the flight deck crew, with no in-flight access, except for entrance or exit by members of the flight deck crew.

Counter-Terrorism Training. Mandates giving airline crews intensive, realistic training to deal with hijackings.

Flight School Training. Requires individuals seeking flight instruction to submit to a background check, and an Immigration and Naturalization Service review for foreign students.

Small Security Fee. Imposes a one-way fee on passenger tickets to pay for screener workforce - not to exceed \$2.50 per ticket.

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